



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE STATE HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S REVIEW PROGRAM
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October 14, 2011

TO: Melissa Brown

FROM: Teresa Parsons, SPHR
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Melissa Brown v. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-11-010

On September 1, 2011, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference regarding the allocation of your position. In addition to you, Dr. Trevor Travers, Psychologist 4 and Union Shop Steward, Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) Local 782, participated in the conference. John Black, Classification and Compensation Specialist, represented DSHS.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to December 17, 2009, the date you submitted your request for a position review to Eastern State Hospital's (ESH's) Human Resources (HR) Office. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Secretary Senior classification.

Background

On October 30, 2009, you and your supervisor, Director of Psychology John Williams, Ph.D., signed a Position Description Form (PDF) requesting reallocation of your position. On December 3, 2009, you completed a Position Review Request (PRR) also requesting reallocation of your Secretary Senior position to the Administrative Assistant 3 (AA 3) classification. On December 17, 2009, ESH's HR Office received both the PDF and PRR. On January 26, 2010, Mr. Black sent you an email asking for clarification about your duties, which you provided the next day (Exhibits B-7 and B-8). On February 14, 2011, Mr. Black determined your position was properly allocated as a Secretary Senior. Specifically, Mr. Black concluded your position did not meet the reporting relationship required for an AA 3 because you do not report to a second line supervisor. In addition, he concluded your position had not been assigned duties of a substantive nature appropriate to be performed by your supervisor.

On March 14, 2011, the Department of Personnel received your request for a Director's review of DSHS's allocation determination.

Summary of Ms. Brown's Perspective

You assert you meet the requirements of the AA 3 classification. You contend your position is responsible for major program activities delegated to you by your supervisor, the Director of the Psychology Department. As an example, you state that you have been delegated responsibility for running active therapy groups of patients at the Treatment Mall, which you describe as one of your supervisor's responsibilities. In addition to leading the groups, you assert you prepare for group sessions by gathering materials and preparing rosters. You further assert that you chart patients' participation after each group session. You contend your duties and responsibilities relating to these groups take more than half of your work week. In addition, you contend you perform other administrative functions on behalf of your supervisor, which include timekeeping functions for the department; setting up training for the psychologists reporting to your supervisor; tracking continuing education and licensing for department psychologists; assigning and scoring the psychologists' peer reviews; backing up your supervisor on two committees that he chairs; and purchasing department equipment, testing materials, and office supplies. Overall, you believe the duties and level of responsibility assigned to your position fit the AA 3 job classification.

Summary of DSHS's Reasoning

DSHS asserts the duties and responsibilities assigned to your position do not meet the requirements of the Administrative Assistant classes. DSHS contends your position has not been assigned duties of a substantive nature that are appropriate to be performed by your supervisor. Further, although your position reports to the Head of the Psychology Department, DSHS asserts your position does not meet the AA 3 requirement to report to a second-level supervisor. Specifically, DSHS indicates that none of the Psychologist positions reporting directly to your supervisor have the responsibility for supervising other positions. DSHS asserts the duties you perform in support of your supervisor are secretarial in nature and include fairly routine processes or clerical functions. Further, DSHS describes the patient groups you lead as recreational, not psychology-related active treatment groups. DSHS also notes that a number of staff members volunteer to help facilitate these types of groups as well. Overall, DSHS contends the administrative and secretarial functions you perform fit within the Secretary Senior classification.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Duties and Responsibilities

Both the Position Description Form (PDF) completed by your supervisor, Dr. John Williams, and the Position Review Request (PRR) that you subsequently completed contain a similar

description of duties and responsibilities. Dr. Williams signed the PRR indicating the information you described on the form was accurate and complete. ESH's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Connie Wilmot, also reviewed and signed both forms on December 28, 2009. However, Ms. Wilmot disagreed with Dr. Williams, and she indicated the duties assigned to your position did not reach the AA 3 level of work. As part of DSHS's review, Mr. Black considered both the PDF and PRR. I considered both forms as part of my review as well.

On the PRR, you describe your position's purpose as follows (Exhibit B-1):

My position performs as a sole administrative support as well as confidential secretarial services and assistance for the Director of psychology and similar support for the other psychologists' Department-specific functions. This position utilizes through operating methods and procedures to coordinate with outside attorneys to compile data our psychologists have collected or administered. Maintain timekeeping and sick calls for the supervisor.

Similarly, your position's scope of work on the PDF describes, in part, the administrative support and confidential secretarial services you provide to the Director of Psychology, as well as the support you provide to the other psychologists in the department (Exhibit B-2).

The majority of work described (80% on the PRR and 75% on the PDF) includes the following duties:

- Administrative and secretarial services;
- Transcribing and formatting all documents;
- Developing and maintaining extensive hard copy and electronic filing system to support operations;
- Drafting and revising forms;
- Composing meeting minutes;
- Timekeeping for department;
- Ordering office and testing supplies;
- Verifying psychologists' annual license renewals on DOH's website and logging the information;
- Maintaining department and individual psychologist's inventory;
- Assigning QI [Quality Improvement] peer reviews to psychologists;
- Tabulating data received and preparing reports.

Your position's scope of work on the PDF more specifically describes some of the above duties, which include:

- Participation on several hospital committees and department business and QI committees;
- Composing meeting minutes from notes;
- Maintaining original ESH Policy and Procedure and department manuals;
- Preparing reports for committee and department;
- Overseeing and operating OpScan 2 scanner and Pearson's Q Local software to score psychological tests [scan the tests into a computer and enter test scores into another program that generates a larger report – Exhibit B-8];

- Preparing purchase requests;
- Preparing and sending application packets and maintaining applicant files;
- Developing and maintaining files for psychological test raw data and reports, including electronic files;
- Receiving and managing outside requests for psychological data from attorneys;
- Scheduling room for department and committee meetings;
- Providing ITA backup roster for the APU psychologists;
- Maintaining psychologists' timekeeping records, including the recording of daily sick calls for supervisor;
- Developing and maintaining program for tracking charting dates on patients assigned to psychologists' groups.

Your work involving the scoring of psychological tests on the computer and distributing the tests to outside evaluators/attorneys when requested via court order or release from patient has been described as 5% of your overall duties.

The responses you provided to Mr. Black during DSHS's review help clarify the scope and level of responsibility assigned to your position (Exhibit B-8). You also provided further clarification during the Director's review conference. For example, you explained that you assign peer reviews to psychologists based on a rotation, which may include factors like availability or patient type. The psychologists review other psychologist's assessments, complete a quality improvement form, and score each other's performance using a 1 – 5 point scale. You explained that you combine the scores for each psychologist being reviewed, calculate the percentage of mistakes, and include the information in a report to be presented at the next department meeting. During the Director's review conference, Dr. Travers noted your calculations involved a level of quantitative analysis. In addition to the quality improvement reports, you prepare committee agendas, reports to outside attorneys requesting patient data, reports generated from test scores you enter into the computer, other patient data reports, and purchasing/inventory reports.

You also included a document that identifies you as the lead for a variety of treatment mall group activities (Exhibit A-2). The document lists activities that involve recreational and social interactions, as Mr. Black indicated during the Director's review conference, further supported by your description of the group activities (Exhibit B-9). The activities relevant to the time period for this review include the library, volleyball, and group walks. While it demonstrates your involvement facilitating two group activities per week between July and September 2009, the group activities are not the primary focus of your position. In addition, your duties leading group activities are recreational in nature rather than administrative. Your duties preparing rosters and charting patient participation in the groups are secretarial and clerical in nature. These duties can be viewed as part of the administrative, secretarial support you provide to the Director of Psychology.

Class Specifications

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations.

The Administrative Assistant class series does not have a class series concept. However, the **Administrative Assistant 1** (AA 1) class specification notes the work assigned to Administrative Assistant positions "is not clerical or secretarial as stated in those class specifications." Further, "only positions at [the AA 1] level . . . may be assigned some clerical and/or secretarial duties not to exceed 25% of the total work." While some of your duties and responsibilities may fit the AA 1 level of the series, the overall focus of your position better aligns with the **Secretary** class series concept, which describes, in part, a position that "provides secretarial services and assistance for the purpose of facilitating the supervisor's and/or staff members' own work and relieving the supervisor and/or staff members of day-to-day clerical detail."

Further, the **Administrative Assistant 2** (AA 2) definition describes positions providing "administrative and staff support services . . . with delegated authority to act in supervisor's absence in areas of substance." The AA 2 distinguishing characteristics further emphasize "the delegation of authority to act for or in the regular place of the superior in substantive areas . . ."

The **Administrative Assistant 3** definition describes positions performing "varied administrative and secretarial support duties" or those with responsibility for "one or more major program activities under a second line supervisor." The AA 3 distinguishing characteristics clarify that "[p]ositions are delegated higher-level administrative support duties or positions are delegated one or more major program activities that would be performed under a second-level professional supervisor." The higher-level administrative support duties are distinguished as follows:

Higher-level administrative duties are duties of a substantive nature that are appropriate to be performed by the supervisor, manager, administrator, or professional level employee but have been delegated to the administrative assistant to perform. Areas may include but are not limited to, the following: budget development and/or management, expenditure control, office space management, equipment purchases, budget development and/or management, public relations, personnel administration, records management, and report preparation.

While there is some overlap between the Administrative Assistant and Secretary classes, the bulk of work assigned to your position does not involve performing higher-level administrative duties consistent with the requirements of this class. For example, your position performs timekeeping and leave tracking functions for the department and processes applicant packets, but your involvement is more process oriented and clerical in nature than higher-level personnel administration.

Further, your position has not been delegated authority at a level that involves substantive duties or decision-making in areas such as personnel administration, budget development, or equipment purchases, though you do prepare purchase requests and track information.

Overall, your position has been assigned tasks that involve verifying information; entering data; tabulating and compiling reports; composing and drafting documents; responding to requests for information; taking and transcribing notes; scheduling meetings; ordering supplies and maintaining inventory; logging and tracking information; and maintaining files. The primary focus of your position is to provide secretarial support to Dr. Williams and the psychologists assigned

to the Psychology Department. Therefore, the majority of your duties better align with the **Secretary** class series concept, described in total as follows:

In support of a supervisor and/or staff members, provides secretarial services and assistance for the purpose of facilitating the supervisor's and/or staff members' own work and relieving the supervisor and/or staff members of day-to-day clerical detail. Applies knowledge of supervisor's and/or staff members' work commitments including status of projects and nature of contacts. Secretarial duties include making travel arrangements, scheduling meetings, taking notes and transcribing minutes, screening calls and visitors, keeping supervisor's and/or staff members calendar(s) and committing supervisor's and/or staff members' time.

The **Secretary Senior** has been defined as follows:

Perform complex secretarial duties such as independently planning, organizing and prioritizing work, monitoring and evaluating budget(s) status and initiating corrections, developing travel itineraries, compiling reports, studies, and/or applications, developing, modifying, and/or maintaining data base management, office record keeping, or filing system(s), establishing office procedures, standards, priorities, and deadlines, and coordinating office operations. Positions initiate action to ensure work unit and/or office goals are met and have frequent contacts with clients, the public, staff members from other departments, students, and faculty.

Assignments and projects are of a complex nature. Independent performance of complex secretarial assignments requires substantive knowledge of a variety of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, processes, materials, or equipment. Problems are resolved by choosing from established procedures and/or devising work methods. Guidance is available for new or unusual situations. Deviation from established parameters requires approval. Work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with established policies and procedures.

Your position performs complex secretarial duties, and you independently plan, organize and prioritize your work. You monitor and track a variety of information for the Psychology Department. You also compile reports; develop, modify, and maintain tracking systems for department data, record keeping, and filing systems. In addition you back up your supervisor and perform duties in support of his role(s) on hospital committees, and you ensure department policies, procedures, and manuals are up to date.

Although examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. While not exact, the Secretary Senior typical work examples that most align with the level and scope of your duties and responsibilities include:

- Formatting transcription from rough draft and taking meeting minutes;
- Composing letters, meeting notices, and agendas;
- Compiling and producing reports;
- Scheduling duties;
- Proofreading materials;

- Resolving and responding to inquiries regarding procedures and services;
- Answers telephones, receiving, screening, and referring visitors;
- Establishing office procedures, standards, priorities, and deadlines;
- Establishing or revising electronic or manual files;
- Completing or processes requisitions, invoices and payroll;
- Attending meetings on behalf of supervisor(s) or work group and representing supervisor or work group in supervisor's absence;
- Ordering supplies and equipment;
- Using spreadsheet and data base software to develop and maintain records;
- Preparing spreadsheets involving the development of formulas and combining files to create reports.

Overall, your position facilitates the work of the Psychology Department and relieves Dr. Williams and the psychologists reporting to him of the day-to-day clerical details.

It is clear from Dr. Travers' comments during the review conference that you are an asset to ESH's Psychology Department. A position's allocation is not a reflection of performance or an individual's ability to perform higher level work. Rather, an allocation is based on the majority of work assigned to a position and how that work best aligns with the available job classifications. The Secretary Senior classification is the best fit for the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to your position.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located at 521 Capitol Way South, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 664-0388, and the fax number is (360) 586-4694.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: John Black, DSHS
Lisa Skriletz, State HR Office

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

Melissa Brown v. DSHS
ALLO-11-010

A. Melissa Brown's Exhibits

1. Memorandum from Melissa Brown requesting Director's Review
2. Printout of groups held by Melissa Brown from 4/1/2008 to 4/1/2011 (some are outside the timeframe relevant to this review)
3. August 2009 Performance and Development Plan

B. DSHS's Exhibits

1. Position Review Request (PRR) December 4, 2009
2. Position Description Form (PDF), position 70125327, legacy number LC23E, signed December 28, 2009
3. Previous updated PDF, dated May 8, 2006
4. Melissa Brown's supervisor's PDF, position 70125294, legacy number EW61, dated December 14, 2007
5. Origination Chart-HRMS List Display-Relationships (Org Chart)
6. Denial letter dated February 14, 2011 (DSHS's allocation decision)
7. Email from John Black to Ms. Brown, subject: Position Review, January 26, 2010, requesting clarification on items in her PRR
8. Email reply from Ms. Brown, January 27, 2010, to the questions asked in Mr. Black's January 26 email
9. Email reply from Ms. Brown March 17, 2010, describing the groups she leads
10. Secretary Senior Class Specification
11. Administrative Assistant 3 Class Specification
12. Administrative Assistant 2 Class Specification